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ABSTRACT

Development of human resources is the primary purpose of vocational education, and it is only through continued professional growth that vocational educators can develop and maintain the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits needed to assist others in the process of realizing their full potential. The individual and professional development of vocational educators may be viewed in terms of the same models used to describe the improvement of an entire nation. The following models are particularly relevant to those responsible for providing professional development opportunities for adult educators: the KASH Formula, Main Event Principle, People Resist Change, Desire for Change, Attitude Box, Attitude Stair Steps, Behavior Is Goal Directed, Two Tragedies, and Opportunity Wedge models. These models suggest that (1) improvement is realized by increasing one's knowledge and skills and changing one's attitudes and habits; (2) all people resist change to some extent and must learn to overcome this resistance; (3) vocational educators must develop a positive attitude toward self-improvement and become sufficiently anxious to increase their desire for change; and (4) because motivation comes from within each person, professionals must establish their own self-improvement goals. Although those responsible for staff development cannot motivate the vocational educators with whom they are working, they can stimulate them to continue to expand their professional horizons. (MN)

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EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL HORIZONS:
INCREASING PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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Expanding Professional Horizons: Increasing Professional Opportunities

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Introduction

Is there a time in the life of a vocational educator when professional development becomes unimportant? That particular point where contributions made, and services rendered, have been so significant that the professional has earned the right to coast the rest of the way to retirement and beyond?

Before answering that question, please consider another: Are there individuals within our profession who have done very little to improve themselves?

The word coast contained in the first paragraph, should give the reader a clue to the answer desired by the author. No matter how much momentum the professional has built up over time, ultimately, the only way a coaster can travel is down hill.

And with respect to the second question, Rosenthal (1974) quoted a Ella Wheller Wilcox poem entitled "Lifting and Leaning" which speaks directly to this problem. Speaking of the two kinds of people, which she classified as lifters and leaners, Wilcox said:

> . . . and oddly enough you'll find too, I ween,
> there's only one lifter to twenty who lean. p. 36.

Based on an address at the joint session of the National Association of Industrial and Technical Teacher Educators, Industrial Arts and Technical Education Association at Atlanta, Georgia, December, 1985.

Surely vocational educators are not representative of the ratio presented in Wilcox's poem (twenty leaners to one lifter). But it is highly probable that vocational education has its fair share of leaners. It is the intent of this paper, therefore, to present information that will: 1) encourage truly professional people to continue developing and growing until they are no longer able to assimilate and synthesize new information and apply that new information toward their own improvement, 2) encourage vocational education leaners to begin lifting their fair share of the load, and 3) assist those who are responsible for providing professional development opportunities for others.

Development of the human resource is the primary purpose for which vocational education exists. It is important work to be involved in the process of helping people become all that they are capable of becoming. Maslow (1954) called the process self-actualization, Ardrey (1966) called it identity, but most educators refer to the process as assisting people to realize their full potential. It is only through professional growth that vocational educators can develop and maintain the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits needed to assist others in this process of becoming all that they are capable of becoming.

Overcoming Inertia

To achieve the paper's three purposes, the author will use 9 of 151 models from a unique management language called Model Netics. Model Netics was developed by Harold Hook (1971), the founder of Main Event Management Corporation, to assist in the process of achieving predetermined objectives through others.

If the president of the United States were asked, "What can your administration do to help America improve its relative position in the

world?" an accurate response would be, "The administration must become actively involved in helping the people develop their KASH Formulas (1971).

Interestingly, the process by which individuals improve is the same as the process used to improve the people of the nation (or world), that is, develop one's KASH Formula.

KASH Formula is a model that presents the four elements of a program for personal improvement. The model presents the concept that improvement is realized by increasing one's knowledge, changing one's attitude, increasing one's skills, and/or changing one's habits. To visualize the principle contained in the model, one needs to view the figure as a broken shaft. Each corner of the top part of the shaft represents one element of KASH, and the diamond at the bottom of the shaft represents improvement. It may be noted, also, that there is a progressive aspect to the model, i.e., one's attitudes are influenced by what one knows; what one can do (skills) is based on what one knows and believes; and what one knows, believes, and does influences the habits that one develops. Improvement (the diamond) is separated from the shaft to show that improvement does not always occur when there is an increase in the KASH Formula. The important point is, however, that there can be no improvement without increasing the formula.

It may seem trite to say that unless things change, they remain the same. But as obvious as this truth may seem, it is a most important concept in professional development. (One does not develop one's KASH Formula without changing). Unless things change, they remain the same is the definition for the second model which is the Main Event Principle (1971). This model presents the principles that: 1) to keep

abreast of developments within the profession one must be constantly involved with adaptive change, and 2) to help lead the profession one must develop to the point of being able to affect creative change.

The Main Event Principle brings us to the seemingly impossible position of saying, "improvement can not occur unless people change, and everyone knows that people resist change." The next model, People Resist Change?? (1971), asks the reader to carefully examine the much used assertion that people resist change, and look for what is actually true in relation to people and change.

After careful consideration of the statement, it should become evident that people do not resist all change. In addition to questioning the truth of the statement, the two question marks should lead the reader to the following two statements that are closer to truth regarding change:

1. People resist some change, and
2. People resist being changed.

From the literature of psychology, one may find a definition for motivation similar to the following: Motivation is a construct intervening between stimulus and response which tends to strengthen the response. Definitions such as this have contributed to the habit of defining psychologists as people who tell us what we already know in words that we cannot understand. To simplify the concept of motivation, and avoid the accusation of telling people something that they do not understand, the next model, Desire for Change (1971), presents a three word definition for motivation. This three word working definition of motivation presents at least the following principles about motivation:

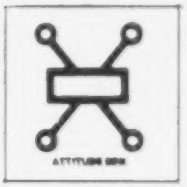
1. Motivation comes from within each person, and
2. One cannot motivate another; one can only stimulate another.

Attitudinal Adjustment

If one cannot motivate another with regard to professional development, what is important to know about stimulating someone to develop this desire for change? The next four models will address this question.

The first of these four models is referred to as the Attitude Box (1971). The Attitude Box is a hieroglyphic synthesizing the following concepts:

1. A person's response to a stimulus is determined by that person's attitude, and
2. A person's attitude is formed by all previous experiences (their KASH Formula) and the present environment.



The box part of the model represents an individual's attitude. The upper left antenna represents a stimulus; the upper right represents a person's response to that stimulus. Inferred in the model is that the response will be affected by attitude. The lower two antennas represent the operant forces which determine a person's attitude, i.e., 1) previous experiences, and 2) present environment.

If attitude is important for creating a desire for change (a desire for professional development) and if that desire for change comes from within, what can be done to influence a person's attitude to the point where he/she will take desired action? The Attitude Stair Steps (1971) addresses this question. The Attitude Stair Steps presents four adjustments

in attitude that must occur for action to result. At the top of the stairs is action desired and the four steps leading up to that action are: 1) an awareness of what is desired, 2) an understanding of the desired action, 3) a feeling of concern regarding the present condition vis a vis the desired action, and 4) dissatisfaction sufficient to create the desire to take the desired action. Action that is desired is frequently unobtained because insufficient attention is given to: 1) making people aware of a better way, 2) ensuring understanding of what is best, and 3) creating concern and dissatisfaction regarding where one is professionally with respect to where one ought to be (attitude adjustment).

Addressing Apathy

With all of the attention given to the importance of goal directed learning it should be obvious that something is missing. The next word model fills the missing link. The model presents the concept that Behavior is Goal Directed (1971). Implications to be drawn from this model in the area of professional development is that: 1) it is important for professionals to establish self-improvement goals, and 2) each person must establish his/her own goals. Because of the personal responsibility associated with the task, goal setting becomes one of the points in the professional development process where breakdowns may occur.

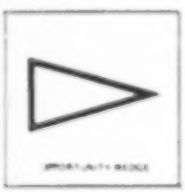
To realize the positive effect that goals have on behavior, each professional must assume responsibility for setting his/her own goals.

The last two models are presented in an attempt to create sufficient dissatisfaction within professionals who have neglected self-development activities. The first model is Two Tragedies (1971). The two tragedies represented

by the model are: 1) achieving all of one's goals, and 2) failure to achieve one's goals. Achieving all of one's goals is a tragedy because it implies that the vital growing and achieving process so important in the professional's life has ended, and if physical death has not occurred, then, professional death surely has.

Failure to achieve one's goals may lead to unrequited guilt that could lead to stress, burn out, and depression; however, failing to achieve one's well-formulated self-development goals is not the tragedy that the reader should be concerned with, for there is a far greater tragedy implied in the model. Would not professionals who fail to set goals for themselves represent the greater tragedy?

The last model is included to further the goal of creating anxiety sufficient to foster a desire for professional improvement. The Opportunity Wedge (1972), presents the concept that life is characterized by lost opportunities and closing horizons. The wedge may be viewed as a graph showing opportunity at birth (shown by the left of the wedge) and at death (shown by the right of the wedge). It is important to note that professional death frequently occurs before physical death, and the only way to blow the wedge apart so that professional death will be longer in coming is to improve one's KASH Formula--increasing knowledge, changing attitudes, developing new skills, and forming new habits--professional development.



Summary

Arriving at the point of beginning (developing one's KASH Formula), the task remains to summarize the concepts presented. In summary, then, vocational education will not improve unless vocational educators improve

(professionals improve the profession). To expand professional horizons and increase professional opportunities, vocational education practitioners should: 1) develop their KASH Formula, 2) overcome the natural resistance toward being changed, 3) set professional development goals for themselves, 4) develop a plan for achieving those goals, 5) develop a positive attitude toward self-improvement, and 6) become sufficiently anxious to increase their desire for change.

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